

Farr questioned the heads of ICE and USCIS when they testified before the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee on which he serves.

"I look forward to being involved in debating and crafting comprehensive immigration reform this Congress. In the meantime however, my constituents and my staff are constantly confronted with the local impact of current immigration enforcement efforts on our community," said Farr.

"Broad-brush raids for undocumented immigrants that encroach on the daily lives of residents are an ineffective and inefficient use of ICE resources. They lead to mass chaos and confusion among our immigrant families, and that fear infects every member of our community. As I told Secretary Meyers, we have a finite number of immigration enforcement agents with a finite budget and I want them to use their resources in the most safe and effective manner possible - namely, by prioritizing sweeps of local and state prisons for undocumented criminals."

During the hearing, Secretary Meyers responded to Farr by agreeing that ICE needed to focus on boosting their "criminal alien program" which sweeps local prisons, and that she is aware of the need to build a better relationship with state and local law enforcement.

Farr also pressured Director Gonzales to get to the bottom of massive backlogs in legal immigration applications, especially intra-governmental delays from coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for fingerprints or Department of Labor for employment verifications.

"I employ a significant staff to help constituents navigate the immigration system and often my staff finds the process painfully complex. We need some answers about how to deal with the backlog once and for all. Hopefully dealing with the backlogs will be part of any serious immigration reform Congress considers this year," said Farr.

Secretary Meyers and Director Gonzales were before Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee to testify about their proposed budget for the coming year. Farr and other subcommittee members will be involved in writing the DHS funding bill over the next several months.